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PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 10, 2024 | 7:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Rick Adams with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Rick Adams, Vice-Chair Ulrika Zay, Secretary John Wiesner, Zoning Board of Appeals Representative Charles Openlander, Beth Ball, Ron Overton, and Richard Turcotte. Absent were Joe Davis and Andrew Powers.

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Andrea Polverento.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED: Polverento reviewed the communications received.

AGENDA APPROVAL:

Motion by Zay, seconded by Openlander, to approve the January 10, 2024 regular meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT, NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

John Schroeder, 4265 Chancellor Drive, commented on non-motorized transportation on the east side of the township, along Airport Road between Howe and Clark Roads. He inquired if there were any plans for a multi-purpose trail along Airport Road so those living in Lakeside or nearby had safer access to DeWitt.

The Planning Commissioners responded with comments about the township's non-motorized transportation plan, and how non-motorized transportation is addressed in the master plan. Polverento briefly described a previous grant which addressed improvements to the Airport Road bridge over the Looking Glass River and perimeter sidewalk requirements at Lakeside Preserve.

The Planning Commission recommended Mr. Schroeder speak with Township Manager Tubbs about future plans and coordination with the Clinton County Road Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. December 6, 2023 Regular Meeting

Motion by Zay, seconded by Ball, to approve the regular meeting minutes of December 6, 2023 as presented. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. 2024 Master Plan

Chair Adams opened the public hearing at 7:31pm, and the public hearing procedure was summarized.

Polverento reported on the activities that had taken place to get to this point, she described the required notification process that had occurred, and the steps that could be taken at the conclusion of the public hearing. She noted that any actions the Planning Commission may wish to take depending on the comments received should be discussed during deliberations later in the meeting. She further stated that the township had not received any calls, written comments, or other remarks resulting from the public notice.

Overton discussed considering adding an implementation item on Page 3.15 to reflect Mr. Schroeder's comments from earlier in the meeting. This could include improving non-motorized access along Airport Road from Howe Road south to Clark Road.

John Schroeder, 4265 Chancellor Drive, commented that he reviewed the major goals of the master plan, and felt that his comments regarding non-motorized access spoke to many of the goals of the plan.

Ball referenced potential new developments in DeWitt along the same corridor. Schroeder added that improving pedestrian access in that area would improve safety and connect some of the legacy neighborhoods in the township. Schroeder is concerned about pedestrian safety in particular, as there was an accident that resulted in a death a few years ago.

Turcotte noted that he had proposed working with utility companies and MDOT to implement multi-use paths along rights-of-way. This was included in the non-motorized plan, but he feels it should also be reflected in the master plan. Zay agreed that is important to add this as an implementation item.

Ball thanked staff and Giffels Webster for improvements to the maps throughout the document. Overton thanked staff for all their hard work on this project.

Dennis Strahle, 12833 Clark Road, Eagle Township Trustee, stated that he was attending this meeting to see how this process worked, and shared that Eagle Township had appointed a new Planning Commission, who were working hard to develop a master plan themselves.

Polverento thanked the Planning Commission, especially the master plan committee, for their hard work and attention to this project during the past few years.

There being no further public comment, Chair Adams closed the public hearing at 7:48pm.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. 2023 Planning Commission Annual Report

Motion by Openlander, seconded by Zay, to approve the 2023 Annual Report of the Planning Commission, and to forward the report to the Board of Trustees for further action. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. 2024 Master Plan

The Planning Commission discussed the points which were brought up during the public hearing. The Commissioners directed Polverento to work with Giffels Webster to add the following two items as priority implementation items on Page 3.15:

- Expand non-motorized opportunities and facilities along Airport Road between Howe Road and Clark Road; and
- Encourage the use of MDOT and utility corridors for multi-use trails and pathways.

Polverento will tentatively plan to provide a resolution of adoption for the 2024 master plan at the February regular meeting of the Planning Commission, pending receipt of a final document from Giffels Webster.

No action taken.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

1. Executive Committee Report – None.
2. Ordinance Review Committee Report – None.
3. Site Plan Review Committee Report – None.
4. Board of Trustees Report – Overton provided the Board of Trustees report.
5. Zoning Board of Appeals Report – None.
6. Capital Improvements Committee Report – None.
7. Staff Reports: Assistant & Director's Reports – Polverento provided the staff reports.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM AUDIENCE, STAFF, AND COMMISSIONERS:

Dennis Strahle, 12833 W. Clark Road, Eagle Township Trustee, noted that Eagle Township had appointed an excellent Planning Commission, and they are working hard to prepare a master plan and other documents. Strahle also commented on the township's decision to eliminate fire run fees for residents, and noted that he had expected a much higher turnout for the master plan public hearing.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Zay, seconded by Wiesner, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:23pm.

Date approved: 3/6/24

Rick Adams, Chair

John Wiesner, Secretary